

Promoting Children's Early Literacy Development: The Role of Parental Involvement in School Activities

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Abstract

The present study explores Filipino parents' perceptions of their role in fostering their children's early literacy skills, their collaboration with schools, and the challenges they encounter in parental involvement. Employing an exploratory qualitative design, data from in-depth interviews with seven parents of Grade One students from two public schools were analyzed thematically. Findings reveal that parents perceive their involvement as a collaborative partnership with teachers and active engagement in home- and school-based activities, although class story-reading sessions were identified as the only school activity they were involved in. Limited time due to work commitments and a lack of parent-friendly activities were the main barriers to active involvement, resulting in minimal opportunities for parents to participate. Nonetheless, participants expressed willingness to engage in school activities such as class story-readings, provided these are carefully planned to accommodate working parents' schedules. The study concludes with implications for stakeholders to diversify parent-friendly activities and accommodate working parents, and recommends expanding future research to private schools, greater sample diversity, and teacher and administrator perspectives. These findings offer initial insights to guide educational institutions and policymakers in implementing programs that foster children's early literacy development and academic success.

Keywords: *Parental involvement, early literacy, parental involvement challenges, parent-teacher partnership, promoting literacy development, exploratory qualitative research.*

INTRODUCTION

Parent involvement (PI) is a complex and multifaceted concept. Many aspects of it involve not only the parents, but also the students, teachers, school administrators, staff members, and other stakeholders. However, in this study, the spotlight is placed on one of the vital stakeholders: the parents. Following the definition of Garcia and Ancheta (2022, p. 83), PI is the active engagement of parents reflected in both school-based activities and home-based support. This definition serves to illuminate the central role of parents in shaping an effective learning environment for their children and fostering literacy development.

Literacy development serves as a foundational outcome of meaningful parental engagement, underpinning the child's ability to access and benefit from educational opportunities. As stated by Galolo and Balaba (2025), early literacy encompasses recognition of speech sounds, acquisition of vocabulary, and improvement of narrative comprehension. These skills are essential to a child's academic performance, cognitive growth, and long-term career potential. Literacy in children begins as soon as they are born and is developed through social interactions and experiences. Exposure to the literate world, which may include anything with written texts, also contributes to the development of literacy in children. The acquisition of literacy skills in preschool, such as phonological awareness and memory, as evidenced in Majorano et al.'s (2021) study, indicates how well children will read and write in primary school. Furthermore, Sucena et al. (2023) emphasize that early reading interventions play a vital role in early academic development, specifically the use of phonological awareness and vocabulary development programs during preschool years leads to better literacy skills later.

Studies have shown that children's literacy development is closely linked to the nature and quality of interaction between parents and their children. Alramamneh et al. (2023) found that parents' attitudes toward reading predicted children's reading development in Arabic. Such dispositions among parents serve as strong predictors of children's progress in their literacy development. A supportive home reading environment can have a lasting impact on a child's reading comprehension. Children are more likely to develop strong comprehension skills that carry over into school when they grow up in a home where reading is nurtured and valued (Torppa et al., 2022). Moreover, the studies of Dicataldo et al. (2022) and Matijević and Bernić (2020) emphasize that the frequency of interactions between parents and their children in reading activities influences children's literacy skills development. Regular interaction fosters a stronger literacy foundation in children, and children are more likely to become involved in reading activities when their parents regularly read and discuss stories with them.

In the Philippines, there has been a long-term issue with the literacy skills of primary-level students. Roque et al. (2023) conducted a quantitative study on the reading abilities of first- to third-grade students in a public elementary school in the Philippines and found that the respondents fell within the non-reader and frustration levels, indicating low reading proficiency. Similarly, Diocales and Bantulo (2025) surveyed 320 Grade 3 students at Labangal Elementary School and found that half were placed in the frustration-level group, prompting a need for intervention. Only a minority qualified as independent readers, while 34% were instructional-level readers, able to read but only with teacher support.

At a programmatic level, Adriano's (2023) descriptive evaluative study at a public elementary school in Bulacan assessed the implementation of the Every Child a Reader Program. The study concluded that the program did not significantly improve reading skills among Grade 1 and Grade 3 pupils, where the implementation of the program was an issue. In contrast, Pascua (2025) recently conducted an evaluation of the same reading program in Ilocos Norte, with findings indicating that the implementation was rated high; however, to strengthen literacy outcomes, the study emphasized the need for integrated programming and improved instructional materials. Meanwhile, Librea et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review of 15 studies to synthesize the factors that affect low reading skills among

grade school pupils in the Philippines. One prominent factor that emerged across the studies is the lack of parental involvement (PI).

While studies examining the relationship between PI and student achievement are important, it is also necessary to investigate what parents perceive to be their role when it comes to educating their children. Yang et al. (2023) emphasized in their literature review that it is not only crucial for parents to be involved, but also to understand how they perceive and enact their involvement. The study highlighted the need for further research in this area. Based on Bartolome and Mamat's (2020) case study involving various stakeholders in the Philippine school system, three types of PI were discovered to be instrumental: home-school interaction, in-school engagement, and structured home learning support. The researchers recommended further research focusing on specific stakeholders to validate the findings.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

There has been extensive research worldwide on the impact of PI on the child's literacy development and success. However, this research focuses on elucidating the current state of PI in public schools in the Philippines. Drawing on existing research by Yang et al. (2023) and Bartolome and Mamat (2020), an exploratory study is designed to investigate parents' perceptions of their role in their child's early literacy development, the extent of their collaboration with the school, and the challenges they face in PI. Thus, this study aims to explore how parents get involved in school activities that promote their children's early literacy development, seeking to answer the following questions:

1. What perceptions do parents have regarding their roles in school activities that promote early literacy development?
2. What school activities do parents participate in to promote literacy?
3. What challenges do parents encounter when participating in school activities?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant in shedding light on the phenomenon of parental involvement in early literacy in the school setting. It can provide insight for future researchers to delve deeper into the subject of parental involvement in schools. Moreover, it offers parents a deep understanding of their vital roles in fostering the early literacy development of their children through school activities, thereby inspiring them to become more actively involved. In addition, it would provide evidence likely to help the school prepare a better literacy-related program, fostering an environment that not only facilitates but also encourages parental participation in school activities with the aim of promoting early literacy skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Parent Involvement in Children's Literacy Development

PI plays a vital role in shaping children's academic success, with storytelling being one of the age-old methods that parents employ to teach early literacy skills. A quasi-experimental study over a six-week period involving 62 participants in Indonesia conducted by Maureen et al. (2020) shows that children's literacy and digital literacy were enhanced by structured storytelling activities along with play-based activities. Building on this, Shen and Del Tufo (2022) state that children's literacy development can be supported by regular shared reading between a parent and child, even if the language at home differs from the language used in school. These results are consistent with Batista Rocha and da Mota's (2023) study in Brazil, which emphasizes the significant role of parental reading strategies in enhancing children's phonemic awareness, enriching vocabulary, and improving story comprehension. In line with

this, Adara (2020) suggests in a conceptual paper that parents should be trained to use digital storytelling to enhance early childhood literacy.

While the previously mentioned studies strongly emphasize the significant role of PI in literacy development, the analytical review of López-Escribano et al. (2021) presents a contrasting perspective. They argue that children could learn independently when they were given thoughtfully selected and interactive digital literature. According to their findings, active adult involvement is not necessary for children to develop literacy skills, such as phonological awareness and vocabulary building.

PI is widely regarded as having an essential role in fostering children's academic success, particularly in their early educational journey. A quantitative study by Ridha et al. (2024) that included 100 parents of early-age students in Indonesia affirms that early learners' preparedness for school was significantly influenced by PI. Similarly, a study conducted by Blake (2025), which involved Surinamese participants, reveals a strong correlation between PI and cognitive development among the young learners. PI is found to be closely tied to learners' reading and numeracy literacy skills, suggesting that it has a critical role in foundational academic achievement. While these studies affirm the positive impact of PI on young learners' academic readiness, contrasting evidence (such as Pope's (2020) exploratory research in Tonga) suggests that the findings did not find strong evidence that PI directly led to better student performance.

In the Philippines, studies of a similar nature have been conducted. William et al. (2025) have conducted a mixed-method study in the Philippines context, with participants consisting of educators, parents, and elementary school learners. The findings of the study reveal that consistent parental engagement contributes significantly to students' literacy growth. These are marked by the enhancement of reading comprehension, better writing abilities, and improved academic achievement. Complementing these findings, Postanes et al. (2023) conducted descriptive research on the early language and literacy development of first graders in several schools in Mandaue City and Cebu City. Although the results of the oral reading verification showed that the majority of the pupils fell into the slow category, the researchers discovered that both parents and teachers recognized the importance of the home and school environment as having a great impact on the children's literacy skills development. In sum, PI starts at home, where the most common method of teaching early literacy skills is story reading. Although quite a few studies have presented evidence that PI in schools is closely linked to higher student achievement, other studies exist that indicate otherwise.

Partnership of Parents and Teachers

The partnership between parents and teachers is essential to promote early literacy development in children. Moreira et al. (2023) conducted an intervention-based study in two public elementary schools in Portugal involving 13 mothers with Roma backgrounds, producing evidence that parents from this group showed a willingness to participate in their children's education, expressing an eagerness to improve their literacy skills to support their children at school. Closely related to this are the findings of Aills' (2022) qualitative study in the U.S., where the 17 participating parents understood the importance of partnership with schools and expressed an inclination to work closely with them. Moreover, the study of Penderi et al. (2023), involving 214 children aged 48 to 74 months and their parents from public kindergarten schools across all 13 geographical regions of Greece, explored how the home literacy environment influences children's literacy competencies, revealing that early literacy is shaped by the meaningful engagement of parents and teachers. In a similar study, Carvalheiro et al. (2024) conducted a mixed-methods study in an urban school in the US to examine cultural variations in parents' and teachers' perceptions of PI using four domains of Epstein's Framework, namely parenting, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. This study, involving 49 parents and 20 primary school teachers, showed variations in their perceptions, with each group placing more value on a specific

domain; however, all parents and teachers indicated that all four domains are important. Conversely, in South Africa, Shaik (2023) conducted a study on two teachers' perceptions regarding parent participation and found that the teachers did not have a broad understanding of PI. Furthermore, the teachers expressed a desire to involve parents in storytelling, but only under conditions they themselves decided on.

Research in the local context has emphasized the value of home and school partnerships in promoting early literacy development. Manguilimotan et al. (2025) found that teachers and parents in Cebu City, Philippines, worked actively together to help kindergarten students learn literacy skills. Despite their strong collaboration, they had different views and strategies on how literacy instruction should be conducted. Padillo et al.'s (2024) qualitative study, which involved 30 primary students' parents in Cebu City, Philippines, complemented this. The findings underscored that involving parents in education leads to better academic outcomes, fewer dropouts, and improved overall school quality. These studies are clear attestations that parents recognize and value their partnership with teachers to help their children achieve student success. Nonetheless, the extent of PI was not explicitly stated.

Challenges in Fostering Parent Involvement

Although both teachers and parents acknowledge the importance of PI in promoting literacy, fostering effective parent-school partnerships is often hindered by various challenges. The qualitative study by Ruppert (2025) identified several barriers to PI. One major challenge is that teachers experienced communication difficulties with parents who do not speak English. As a result, they had to resort to unstructured ways of communicating with them. This led to another barrier in which parents felt alienated in the school setting due to limited opportunities for meaningful engagement. Moreover, teachers in the study cited parents' work responsibilities as a barrier to communication. Parents struggled to find the time to work out their schedules to attend formal meetings and regularly engage with school activities, further hindering collaboration between parents and the school.

A qualitative study conducted by Zaidi et al. (2021) echoed similar concerns. They investigated the obstacles that Syrian, Iraqi, and Arab refugees faced when they relocated to Canada. In the findings of this study, one of the strong factors that parents faced was a deficiency in home-school communication methods. Cenatiempo (2021) observed the participants' disparate views on the challenges in PI. School administrators and teachers expressed disappointment over the seeming lack of interest on the part of parents despite the school's efforts to include them in events. On the other hand, parents had to deal with juggling work and family responsibilities, which led to limited interaction with school events. The qualitative study by Nigussie (2021) likewise identifies that the challenge faced by working parents is the conflict between their job schedule and the school timetable, making it difficult for them to actively engage in school-related activities. Besides that, it is indicated in the author's review of the literature that parents were unaware of the teacher's curriculum and failed to bring it up during interactions with teachers, both of which limited active participation (Nigussie, 2021).

While global studies outline this issue, insights from a local study further illuminate it. A descriptive-quantitative study by Pagsuguiron and Lantaka (2024) involving 100 parents from public elementary schools in Zamboanga City, Philippines, revealed that time constraints, behavioral guidance, and environmental conditions were common challenges faced by parents in engaging with their children's education. The study notes that behavioral guidance is linked to time limitation, as parents who spend more time at work struggle to support their children's learning and provide consistent discipline.

Despite the challenges presented, certain approaches have been cited as effective in promoting PI. For instance, a study in Java, Indonesia by Yulianti et al. (2022) found that teacher invitations proved to be an effective way to promote PI in school. Their findings suggested that reaching out to parents could mitigate communication gaps and strengthen the parent-school relationship. In fact, communication is

the most pivotal strategy in fostering PI in schools, as it encourages collaboration and consequently improves and streamlines the educational process (Harp-Ahmad, 2025). These studies present clear evidence of real and persistent barriers that schools and parents face in fostering PI. Although there may be communication challenges, it is vital to reach out to bridge the gap and cultivate stronger partnerships between parents and schools.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed the exploratory qualitative research design to collect data on parental involvement. Exploratory research, designed to shed light on the manifestation of a phenomenon, is beneficial in discovering the comprehensive essence of an insufficiently understood phenomenon. According to Singh (2021), exploratory research is a method used to investigate a topic or phenomenon that is not yet clearly defined or fully understood. This approach enables the present study to gain a more holistic understanding of how parents perceive and experience their involvement in promoting their children's early literacy development. Olawale et al. (2023) explained that exploratory research design is usually utilized to gain insight into a condition that has not been studied in depth, which is fitting given the limited research on parents' perspectives on PI at the early primary level. Additionally, Casula et al. (2021) claim that exploratory research holds the capacity to surface new inquiries, thus motivating further exploration. In this study, PI, as a phenomenon, is explored using semi-structured individual interviews with parents of Grade 1 pupils in the Philippines.

Study Participants

Researcher Description

The study was conducted by a team of three graduate students majoring in Early Childhood Education. Each researcher contributed to the formulation of the research design, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript preparation. Their shared academic background and experience provided a valuable foundation for exploring the topic of parental involvement with regard to promoting early literacy. To mitigate bias and ensure thoroughness and accuracy in analysis, they constantly engaged in reflexive practices at every step of the research process. This included collaborative interpretation of data, discussions of assumptions, and memoing to maintain objectivity in the discussion of findings and the development of conclusions.

Participants or Other Data Sources

The research team invited 16 parents to participate in the study. Of this number, seven responded, all of whom were female, with ages ranging from 30 to 50. Their children were enrolled in the first grade across two public schools. Among the participants, five were married, one was a widow, and one was a single parent. Three were formally employed, while the remaining four were self-employed and primarily engaged in home-based work. The primary language spoken at home is Filipino. By including participants from two distinct school communities, contextual variation in terms of school culture and parental engagement was introduced. These characteristics ensured sufficiently varied data to support thematic exploration and met the goals of the research. In addition, the qualitative approach of the study emphasized depth, and there was adequate data to create recurring themes across interviews.

Participant Recruitment

The participants were chosen through purposive sampling, which ensured that the data collected directly reflected the goals and context of the study. By aligning participant selection with the study objectives, purposive sampling can enhance the overall quality of research findings (Memon et al., 2025). Two criteria were used to determine participant selection. First, the participant must be a parent of a first-grade student. Second, the participant's child must have been receiving similar classroom-based literacy-related activities, allowing for consistent comparison of responses.

Prior to the study, permission was sought from the school head and the first-grade class adviser through a letter stating the purpose and objectives of the study. After approval, the participants were informed about the study, and it was reiterated that all information gathered from them would be kept with the utmost discretion. They were given a week to respond to the interview invitation, and the order of the interviews was based on who confirmed first.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data Collection

The researchers used an in-depth, semi-structured interview to collect the data for the study. As described by Ruslin et al. (2022), the semi-structured interview served as an exploratory conversational format that allowed the researchers to gather in-depth information. Its flexibility enabled the researchers to come up with new questions based on the responses of the interviewees while retaining control over the interview's progression. Four guiding questions were designed to explore three core research questions related to PI in early literacy activities. The semi-structured interviews were conducted using open-ended questions aligned with each research question, allowing for flexibility and depth in responses. Probing questions were used to delve deeper into the participants' thoughts and feelings about their participation in literacy-related school activities. These probes were tailored to each participant's context and were instrumental in uncovering nuanced perspectives. A full list of research questions and probe questions is provided in Appendix A.

The interview was conducted for 25 to 30 minutes and was carried out face-to-face and via a video call at the participants' most convenient time. The questions were prepared in English and translated into Filipino for some participants. The participants responded in the language they were most comfortable with. With the permission of the participants, an audio recording was used. Hill et al. (2022) stated that the use of audio recording during the interviews enables interviewers to review and identify missed details, ensure linguistic accuracy, extract essential direct quotes, and ensure everything meets quality standards. The data collected were analyzed through thematic coding.

Data Analysis

Data-Analytic Strategies

The collected data from the interviews were transcribed, manually coded, and thematized. According to Mohajan and Mohajan (2022), coding was regarded as the most effective analytical tool to uncover patterns and generate theory. It allowed investigators to discern, arrange, and create theory. In this study, the researchers employed the open-coding approach in analyzing the data. As Fuchs (2023) explained, open coding involves free exploration of data, allowing researchers to discover and formulate themes directly from the information gathered. Ensuring participant confidentiality, parent participants were named as P1, P2, so on and so forth (i.e., P1 = Parent 1).

The study followed the six steps outlined by Fuchs (2023). The first step, familiarization with the data, involved reading and re-reading the data to identify key themes and patterns, with detailed notes taken to capture insights. The second step, generating initial codes, involved systematically labeling and categorizing data by significance and relevance to identify emerging themes. The third step, searching for themes, involved analyzing and collating the coded data to identify recurring themes. The fourth step, reviewing themes, involved refining the identified themes and checking for overlap, redundancy, or inconsistency to ensure accuracy. The fifth step, defining and naming themes, involved analyzing the associated codes and data and assigning precise names that captured each theme's essence. The sixth and final step, producing the report, involved synthesizing the findings into a coherent narrative supported by relevant quotes and examples.

Methodological Integrity

The study maintained consistency by first following a collaborative data analysis. In the data analysis process, each researcher reviewed and coded the interview transcripts independently. The group conducted regular discussions during the process of data analysis to reach consensus on emerging themes. This process benefits in minimizing individual bias. Any differences in interpretation were discussed until a consensus was reached. To strengthen the credibility of the study, supplemental checks were employed. Follow-up interviews were conducted with selected participants to validate the initial findings, clarify meanings, and ensure the accuracy of interpretations. This process allowed the researchers to revisit emerging themes and confirm the authenticity of the data.

To provide a more comprehensive understanding of parental involvement, multiple sources of information (e.g., interview transcripts, codes, and theoretical memos from the researchers) were used, from which the researchers compared the findings from these sources. Structured researcher reflexivity was ensured through memo writing during data collection and analysis. This allowed the researchers to critically reflect on potential biases and maintain the credibility and transparency of their findings. Finally, the researchers allowed each member to give feedback and addressed minor inconsistencies that arose during the coding process, such as adjustments in theme labels or overlapping categories, until a final consensus was reached. This process upholds the integrity of qualitative inquiry.

RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethical research standards were observed throughout the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data in this research. All data gathered from other research and sources was properly cited. The researchers included the objectives and purposes of the research, how participants would be involved, and ensured that there were no foreseeable risks to participating in this research for the participants in the information letter. The researchers made sure to obtain each participant's informed consent before proceeding to data collection. Data minimization was observed during the collection of data from the participants. According to Marusic (2023), data minimization involves collecting only the data that is necessary for the objectives of the research to ensure that the participants' data are properly protected. The researchers made sure to use only the data that was relevant to the study.

FINDINGS

This research explored PI in school activities that are related to the development of their children's literacy skills. The parents perceived that they have roles to play in their children's literacy development.

They described the activities they participated in and the challenges they encountered in getting involved in school activities.

Parents' Perspectives on Their Roles in School Activities That Promote Children's Early Literacy Development

The data gathered from interviews revealed indisputable perspectives on parents' roles in supporting early literacy development. Two prominent themes emerged that directly addressed the research question: What perceptions do parents have regarding their roles in school activities that promote early literacy development? These themes, namely *parents as partners of the teacher* and *parents' participation in home-based and school-based activities*, highlight the depth of engagement and the various ways they contribute to literacy initiatives. The following sections unpack these themes, illustrating how parents perceive their involvement as both collaborative and interactive in nurturing their children's foundational literacy skills.

Theme 1: Parents as Partners of the Teacher

The participants acknowledged that one of their roles in promoting early literacy was to collaborate with the teacher. They noted that informing teachers about literacy-related activities their children engaged in at home aided teachers in gaining insight into the child's interests. P1 stated:

The parents should inform the teachers about literacy-related activities their children do at home, like in my case, my child improved his English while playing Minecraft and Roblox.

Furthermore, P6's suggestions on the various ways that parents can collaborate included discussing the child's strengths and needs, as well as providing resources. P6 opined:

Parents should be involved ... by collaborating with the teacher, discussing the child's strengths and needs, and providing resources.

In the follow-up interview, parents shared their experiences, suggesting that parents can support teachers by offering insights and ideas from a parental perspective. P2 expressed:

I collaborate with the teacher, offering insights and ideas from my perspective as a parent.

From participants' responses, parents' roles as partners of the teacher in promoting early literacy varied. They contributed by sharing valuable insights about their child, presenting fresh ideas for literacy activities, and providing resources.

Theme 2: Parents Participate in Home-Based and School-Based Activities

Data from the interviews revealed that parents can significantly contribute to their children's early literacy development by reinforcing the lessons that their children learned in school. Reading stories together and practicing speaking skills are activities parents can implement, as stated by P2:

I engage with my child at home, reinforcing lessons learned at school by reading stories together, practicing speaking, and encouraging writing activities.

Participant 5 also shared other ways of participating in home-based activities that can enhance their children's literacy skills, including conversations with their child, coupled with shared reading sessions and journal writing. She mentioned:

Having conversations with my child regularly, reading together when we have time, and writing journals are some of the activities we do at home.

While P1 and P2 emphasized the support of parents in home-based activities, P3 focused on school-based activities. P3 explained that attending meetings where teachers discuss school activities, such as Catch-Up Fridays, is an occasion for parents to encourage their children's literacy ability development.

I also support my child's school activities by attending meetings where the teacher talks about the schedule of school activities, such as Catch-Up Fridays...

In addition to participating in school activities, P6 expressed that it is essential to participate in other activities aside from meetings. One such activity was the school program, as articulated by P1:

We also need to attend and participate in the school programs.

Parent participation both at home and at school is the highlight of this theme. Parents exert effort to take part in the children's literacy skills development.

School Activities Parents Participated In to Promote Literacy

Building on the perceptions identified in the first research question, the second research question focuses on the specific school-based activities in which parents are involved. The data revealed one theme: Parents participate in class story reading. This theme captures the nature of parental engagement within the school setting, reflecting the structured opportunities offered by educators. The following section presents this theme.

Theme 3: Parents Participated in Class Story Reading

Parents actively took part in class story-reading activities, which helped nurture literacy skills in children. During the interview, P4 highlighted the involvement of parents in school activities, showing a deliberate effort by the school to engage parents in storytelling.

Some parents are tapped to participate in school activities, such as during National Reading Month, there were parents who were tasked to be reading ambassadors.

Furthermore, P2 shared a personal experience of being invited as a mystery reader, corroborating the assertion made by P4, and provided first-hand evidence of parents' direct participation in class story-reading activities.

I was once invited as a mystery reader last November during the celebration of the national reading month.

Parental involvement in class story-reading activities is underscored in these responses, highlighting the collaborative efforts between home and school in promoting reading engagement and literacy development.

Challenges Encountered by Parents When Participating in School Activities

While parents expressed willingness to support literacy initiatives, the data also revealed key barriers that limited their participation. Two themes emerged in response to the third research question: working parents' limited time and a lack of activities that encouraged parent participation. These themes highlight the constraints faced by families in terms of availability and the limited scope of engagement opportunities provided by the school. The following section explores these challenges.

Theme 4: Working Parents' Limited Time

Regarding involvement in school literacy activities, participants were also asked about the challenges they encountered when participating in school activities. Many expressed that their work schedules directly conflicted with the timing of school activities, resulting in their inability to participate. As commented by P5:

The problem really is the time. Even though I really want to participate, I cannot go to school because I have work to do.

P3 highlighted the challenge posed by the sudden scheduling of school activities, which often coincided with their work hours, making it difficult for them to participate. This indicated that parents faced difficulty adjusting their work schedules on short notice to accommodate school events.

...one problem I encountered was when the activity, which is school-wide, was announced only the day before. That's why I was not able to file a leave from work.

P4 emphasized that busy work schedules not only posed challenges for parents in participating in school activities but also did not allow them to engage in teaching literacy to their children.

Since I am busy at work, I don't have much time to teach my child ... I don't really participate that much...

Additionally, the demands of their jobs often left parents feeling exhausted and lacking the energy to fully engage in school-related endeavors, as stated by P7:

The problem that I have encountered is that sometimes I am too tired from working and there isn't much time.

Participants acknowledged that the time constraints of their professional responsibilities served as a major obstacle, impeding parents from actively participating in school events meant to support their children's early literacy growth.

Theme 5: Lack of Activities that Encourage Parent Participation

Based on participants' experiences during their children's schooling, parents perceived a lack of activities in the school that allowed them to engage. Based on the statements of the participants, most activities were conducted exclusively within the classroom setting, limiting parental involvement (PI) to the teacher and the pupils. P2 explained:

...these activities are usually done inside the classroom, so only the teacher and the pupils are involved.

The lack of activities aimed at encouraging parent participation in school-related endeavors was also observed by P5. She explained that the activities were primarily teacher-led and integrated into classroom lessons. She said:

...There are not many opportunities for parents to be directly involved in these activities because they are not school-based and most of the time, reading activities are integrated in the lesson.

Participants acknowledged that the lack of parent-friendly activities at school hindered parents' ability to fully engage in promoting their children's literacy skills. Therefore, they emphasized a desire to participate more actively, as P1 expressed:

I wish I could participate in these activities. Most or almost all of them are held in the classroom, that is why only the teacher can guide them.

While participants have positive perceptions of engaging in early literacy school activities, activities that allow parent participation were limited.

DISCUSSION

The research explores the perceptions, participation, and challenges faced by parents regarding their involvement in school activities aimed at promoting their children's early literacy development. It underscores parents' understanding of their role and their approach to supporting literacy development activities, while also describing the specific activities they undertake. Additionally, the research also highlights that, while parents acknowledge their role in supporting their children's literacy growth, they also recognize the obstacles they encounter, especially working parents, that limit their full involvement in promoting their children's literacy.

The participants' views on the collaborative partnership between parents and teachers in promoting early literacy skills may stem from their recognition of the vital role they play in enhancing children's literacy through school activities. The participants believe that they foster their child's literacy development by collaborating and communicating with the teacher. Whereas Pope's (2020) findings showed that PI is negligible in relation to children's academic performance, and Ates (2021) stated that PI and academic achievement are moderately linked, our research corresponds with the quantitative study of Ashfaq et al. (2024), which showed evidence of a strong link between parent-teacher collaboration and better student progress, thus emphasizing the importance of this partnership in shaping positive student outcomes. In other words, parents act as partners with teachers in their child's literacy journey. This aligns with existing research conducted by Aills (2022), Moreira et al. (2023), and Penderi et al. (2023), which indicated the importance of parent-teacher partnerships in fostering children's literacy ability.

Additionally, the majority of participants perceive their role in PI as consistently attending to their children's home-based activities and, when necessary, participating in school-based activities as well. Coşkun and Katıtaş (2021) identified two main forms of PI, that are home-based and school-based. Home-based involvement includes supportive parenting practices and academic guidance at home, while school-based involvement highlights staying in touch with teachers, maintaining communication, coordinating effort, and taking part in decision-making. Our findings suggest that parents perceive they can enhance literacy by reinforcing school lessons at home while also actively engaging in school-based activities to comprehensively support their children's academic progress. This has also been highlighted in previous studies by Padillo et al. (2024), Postanes et al. (2023), and William et al. (2025).

Notwithstanding the conclusion of López-Escribano et al. (2021) that the participation of adults is not relevant to children's acquisition of literacy skills, our findings have revealed that participants view PI in class storytelling as a means of promoting literacy development. Thus, one of the schools where the study was conducted has made a deliberate effort to promote parent involvement through the reading program during National Reading Month. Participants readily participated in this activity because they

recognized the power of story reading and how it nurtures not only the literacy development of the child but also the working relationship between parents and the school (Shen & Del Tufo, 2022; Maureen et al., 2020; Batista Rocha & da Mota, 2023).

Despite parents' willingness to support and collaborate with teachers, they faced some challenges as working parents. First, the participants expressed difficulties in balancing work responsibilities with school activities. In other words, the time factor is a significant barrier to active PI in school activities. This is consistent with the findings of Mwarari et al. (2020), which indicated that parents faced difficulties in collaborating with the school due to time constraints arising from multiple conflicting responsibilities. Time constraints and parents' personal and work schedules posed constant impediments to sustaining a strong school-parent relationship (Ruppert, 2025; Cenatiempo, 2021; Nigussie, 2021; Pagsuguiron & Lantaka, 2024). Second, many activities are confined to the classroom setting, limiting opportunities for parental engagement. This poses a challenge for schools in implementing impactful initiatives aimed at strengthening the bond between parents and the schools. This supports the findings of Kaya et al. (2025) that the extent of PI is influenced not just by the capacities or resources of the parents, but also by how schools connect with them and the kind of support they offer.

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this research is to elucidate the current condition of PI in the Philippines. Extensive research has been done on the importance of PI; however, there is a noticeable scarcity of recent research regarding its implementation in schools. In this research, parents' perceptions of their role in PI are limited to engaging in home-based activities and partnering with teachers in the form of complying with school-mandated activities. The participants identified only one activity, the class story-reading, as a school-based activity that directly involves parents, despite their claims that they offer insights and ideas during parent-teacher conferences. In effect, inadequate parent-friendly activities hinder parents from participating in their children's literacy development. In addition, time is the most common factor that likewise encumbers their parental involvement activities. The main purpose of PI is to educate the child. Parents need to be apprised that their role in PI in schools is multifarious and not limited to helping children with their homework or attending meetings and school programs. Provided that the school counsels the parents and initiates programs that go beyond the usual classroom settings, PI can effectively contribute to the children's school success. Any challenges in PI can be surmounted with careful organization that involves both parents and the school.

Although the PI in this research is limited to two public elementary schools in the Philippines, it offers implications for various stakeholders involved in education, including parents, teachers, school administrators, and policymakers. First, for parents, the reality of parent involvement in their child's educational journey, particularly in promoting early literacy skills, was found in this research. It is suggested that parents be encouraged to communicate and collaborate with teachers, attend parent-teacher meetings, and share their insights about their child's learning. It is also crucial for parents to prioritize their involvement in their children's education and to explore effective time management. Second, for teachers and school administrators, the findings highlight the importance of fostering collaborative partnerships with parents to support children's literacy development effectively. This includes creating opportunities for parent involvement both at home and in school, as well as soliciting and valuing parental feedback on school activities. In addition, the research underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing the challenges working parents experience in balancing their professional responsibilities with active involvement in their child's education. In order to ensure inclusivity and maximize PI, strategies to accommodate diverse schedules, such as flexible timing for school events or alternative modalities for parent participation, are essential. Moreover, the findings emphasize the need

for schools to expand their repertoire of parent-friendly activities outside the conventional classroom environment. Schools may promote a better sense of connection between home and school by allowing parents to participate in a variety of meaningful ways. Third, for the Department of Education, the research emphasizes the significance of incorporating PI initiatives within educational policies and frameworks. Policies that prioritize PI in school activities can help to improve student outcomes and overall academic success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the valuable contributions provided by this research, certain limitations must be acknowledged. First, due to a short allotment of time, the study is limited to a convenience sample of seven parents from two public elementary schools in the Philippines. Consequently, this sample may not fully represent all parental perspectives and experiences regarding involvement in school activities promoting early literacy. Therefore, it is recommended that future research expand the sample size and diversity of participants from different provinces. This approach may help address the limitations and lead to a more comprehensive understanding of PI in early literacy promotion. Second, this research was exclusively conducted in public schools, so there may be differing perceptions compared with those in private schools. Future research could include a comparative study analysis between public and private schools to investigate differences in PI. Last, since the research only involved interviewing parents, it presents a limitation in terms of participant diversity. To address this, further exploration of the perspectives data to substantiate the full picture of PI in the Philippines, from teachers and school administrators, on how they promote parent engagement could add more.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Above all, we thank the Lord, who grants us whose grace, wisdom, and knowledge have sustained and enlightened us throughout our academic journey. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to those who have helped us in the completion of this research. Their invaluable assistance and encouragement made this endeavor possible, and without their contributions, this research would not have been possible. Our heartfelt appreciation goes to our research adviser, Sir Mark Ulla, for his guidance, encouragement, and support throughout every stage of this research. His insights and step-by-step instructions were instrumental in helping us complete this research with clarity and confidence.

We are sincerely thankful to the administrators of both schools for graciously granting us permission to conduct our research in their institutions. Their generosity and cooperation made it possible for us to carry out this study. We also express our appreciation to all the participants who willingly shared their time and perspectives. Their contributions provided valuable insights for our research in particular and the field of early childhood education in general. To the FMM Sisters in the SVP Region, thank you for your prayers, support, and accompaniment during this academic endeavor. We are also deeply grateful for the love and support of our families and friends, who stood by us throughout this undertaking.

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Appendices

Appendix A- Interview Questions

1. What are your roles in school activities that promote the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in your children?
 - a) How should parents be involved in planning for/organizing the school activities that promote early literacy development?
 - b) How should parents be involved in implementing these school activities?
 - c) How should parents be involved in promoting the school activities that promote early literacy development?
 - d) How should parents be involved during the school activities that promote early literacy development?
 - e) How should parents be involved in the evaluation and giving feedback on the school activities that promote early literacy development?
 - f) Can you share an example where you felt your role was important in supporting your child's literacy?
2. Which school activities do you think promote the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in the children?
 - a) Can you give an example of a specific activity that helped your child improve in one of these areas?
 - b) Which of these activities do you consider most effective? Why?
 - c) Are there any school activities you think should be added to further support literacy development?
3. What activities do you participate in?
 - a) Do you participate more in home-based or school-based activities?
 - b) How often are you invited to participate in school activities?
 - c) Can you describe how your participation affects your child's motivation or interest in literacy?
4. What problems/difficulties do you encounter when participating in school activities?
 - a) How do work schedules or family responsibilities affect your participation?
 - b) Are school activities announced in advance, and does the timing affect your availability to attend?
 - c) Are there opportunities provided by the school for parents to get involved? Why or why not?

Appendix B – Letter of Permission: Garrita Elementary School

The Principal
Garrita Elementary School
Bani, Pangasinan

Dear Sir/Ma'am:

Greetings!

We are students of St. Louis University, School of Advanced Studies. Our group will be conducting a research with the topic, "Parent Involvement in School Activities that Promote the Child's Early Literacy Development". The objective of this research is to explore what parents do to get involved in school activities that enhance their children's early literacy. We ask for your permission to conduct an interview with the parents in grade 1 under the advisory class of Mrs. Meliza P. Reotutar to participate in our research.

Rest assured that the information that will be gathered from the participants will be utilized for the sole purpose of this research.

We look forward to your positive response.

Very truly yours,

SGD

SHAIRA N. EBREO



JEAN F. DOMALANTA



NGUYEN, THI THU HANG

Endorsed by:

MARK BEDOYA ULLA, PhD

Research Promoter

Appendix C – Letter of Permission: Garrita Elementary School

The Principal
Idoldol Elementary School
Calasiao, Pangasinan

Dear Sir/Ma'am:

Greetings!

We are students of St. Louis University, School of Advanced Studies. Our group will be conducting a research with the topic, "Parent Involvement in School Activities that Promote the Child's Early Literacy Development." The objective of this research is to explore what parents do to get involved in school activities that enhance their children's early literacy. We ask for your permission to conduct an interview with the parents in Grade 1 under the advisory class of Mrs. Meliza P. Reotutar to participate in our research.

Rest assured that the information that will be gathered from the participants will be utilized for the sole purpose of this research.

We look forward to your positive response.

Very truly yours,

SGD

SHAIRA N. EBREO



JEAN F. DOMALANTA



NGUYEN, THI THU HANG

Endorsed by:

MARK BEDOYA ULLA, PhD

Research Promoter

Appendix D – Informed Consent Form

Dear Respondent:

May we invite you to participate in an interview for our study on “**Parent Involvement in School Activities that Promote the Child’s Early Literacy Development**”? The study generally aims to determine the extent of parents' involvement in school activities that enhance their children's early literacy. A face to face interview will be conducted, which may take about 20 - 25 minutes of your time. Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary. You are free to quit anytime you want. There are no foreseen risks or adverse effects on your part arising from your participation in this interview. Moreover, all information you provide will be used only for research purposes and kept confidential.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

SGD

SHAIRA N. EBREO



JEAN F. DOMALANTA



NGUYEN, THI THU HANG

Endorsed by:

MARK BEDOYA ULLA, PhD

Project Leader